

EDGEWATER COMMUNITY
Birmingham Industrial District
Off New Mulga Loop Road (JC 80),
four miles N. of Ensley
Birmingham VIC.
Jefferson County
Alabama

HAER No. AL-77

HAER
ALA
37-BIRMV,
7-

PHOTOGRAPHS

HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

National Park Service
Department of the Interior
P.O. Box 37127
Washington, DC 20013-7127

ADDENDUM TO
EDGEWATER COMMUNITY
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WRITTEN HISTORICAL & DESCRIPTIVE DATA

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ADDENDUM TO
EDGEWATER COMMUNITY

HAER No. AL-77

Location: Off New Mulga Loop Road (JC 80), 4 miles north of Ensley in the vicinity of Birmingham in Jefferson County, Alabama.

Date of
Construction: 1910-1920s

Date of
Significance: 1910-1940s

Project
Information: This report is based upon written documentation donated by the Birmingham Historical Society, reformatted to HABS/HAER guidelines.

DESCRIPTION

White and black churches and many houses built by TCI for blacks and whites in geographically-distinct sections remain in the isolated mining village today. The black camp is located along a ridge paralleling the former mine site on the west; the white camp is south of this site. Edgewater is the largest of TCI's remaining coal mining camps with clearly defined black and white sections. The Edgewater Mine site has been totally cleared in the 1990s by USX and utility connections installed.

Remaining at the Edgewater Site are:

Edgewater-TCI Coal Mining Camp, White Section (c. 1910)

Mexico, Libya, Java, Iceland, Holland, Houston, Galveston, Falmouth and Elkhart Streets

Edgewater-TCI Coal Mining Camp, Black Section (c. 1910, 1914-15, 1917-21)

England, Denmark, Canada, Belgium and Arabia Avenues and Kenosha and Jamaica Streets

Edgewater-TCI Coal Mine (Site of) (1910-1920s)

Finland Avenue

Operated from 1910 to 1962, the Edgewater Mine site has been totally cleared in the 1990s by U.S.X. Utility connections have been installed.

Edgewater Methodist Church (1920s)

725 Galveston Street at Holland Street
A TCI company-built church.

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HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Work on the mine at Edgewater began in 1910, simultaneously with development of an industrial water supply for new TCI plant facilities under construction at Ensley and Corey (now Fairfield). By August 1911, TCI had completed a 407-foot-high masonry dam to hold back waters of Village and Camp Branch Creeks and formed a 530-acre reservoir, still known as Bayview Lake. Pumping stations were located at Edgewater. The Edgewater mine, which began operation in 1911, employed 443 persons and quickly became second largest in the district. Production during World War I approached 800,000 tons annually. During the 1920s, the Edgewater mine employed as many as 1,252 persons, not including employees of the Central Water Works pumping station. At this time, production exceeded 800,000 tons. Edgewater remained a large producer through the 1940s, when TCI opened a newer, more modern operation at Concord, near Hueytown.

The Survey, a weekly professional journal for social workers, devoted two issues to conditions of worker housing in the Birmingham District in 1912. It noted "good modern facilities" at Edgewater. Residences for supervisory personnel were on the hillside overlooking the mining headquarters. Separate camps housed white and black employees. The earliest houses were the standard four-room square-tops, arranged in neat rows. Housing for blacks was along Finland Avenue and for whites along Houston and Galveston Streets. TCI expanded housing in 1914-15 and 1917-21, constructing bungalows and double three-rooms identical to those in Fairfield and Bayview. In the 1920s, TCI replaced the original frame churches with handsome brick sanctuaries. Lightning recently destroyed the black church which sat on a commanding site overlooking the mine in the late 1970s. It was designed by land department architect James J. Baird to seat 250 persons, at a reported cost of \$30,000. The mine closed in 1962.

Sources

White, Marjorie, The Birmingham District, pp. 256-259

Site Visit, 7/3/91